



## Economic and Social Council

GENERAL

E/ECE/1262  
6 March 1992

Original: ENGLISH

---

### ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Forty-seventh session  
(Provisional Agenda item 3(e))

#### ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN IN THE LIGHT OF THE FINAL ACT OF THE CSCE

(Commission decision L (45))

Report by the Executive Secretary

1. In accordance with paragraph 3 of decision L (45) the secretariat has continued to cooperate with the secretariats of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) on projects of common interest to all Mediterranean countries. Examples are given under the sectoral headings below.
2. Pursuant to Council resolution 1991/72, Israel became a member of ECE on 26 July 1991, thus increasing the number of ECE member countries in the Mediterranean region. Israel had previously participated actively in ECE work under Article 11 of the Commission's terms of reference.
3. The Executive Secretary has transmitted ECE documentation to non-ECE Mediterranean countries and has invited those countries to participate in relevant ECE meetings. Representatives from non-ECE Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia) participated in ECE meetings since the forty-sixth session in the fields of energy and transport.

### Statistics

4. The CSCE Meeting on the Mediterranean (Palma de Mallorca, 24 September-19 October 1990) proposed that the Conference of European Statisticians convene a meeting of Statistical Offices of the Mediterranean countries. The proposal was favourably considered by the Conference in June 1991 (ECE/CES/138, paras. 86 to 88) and invitations were extended to all interested member countries to participate in the preparation of this event. The Conference accepted gratefully the offer of the Government of Italy to host the meeting in Palermo, tentatively scheduled for 13 to 15 October 1992.

5. The ECE, as Executing Agency, has completed work on phase two of the Statistical Computing Project (SCP-2) which enjoyed the financial support of UNDP. Thirty-two final outputs are available and have been distributed to countries in Africa and Europe including interested Mediterranean countries.

### Transport

6. The Inland Transport Committee in its work on transport infrastructure and the analysis of transport flows, in particular multimodal transport, has continued to take into account the needs of the Mediterranean countries in accordance with the Report of the CSCE Palma de Mallorca Meeting, as illustrated below.

7. The Transport Study Centre for the Eastern Mediterranean in Volos (Greece), the Transport Study Centre for the Western Mediterranean in Barcelona (Spain), and the Transport Training Centre in Istanbul (Turkey) have continued to cooperate with the Inland Transport Committee and to make a positive contribution to its programme of work on subjects of specific interest to the Mediterranean countries.

8. Further progress was made in 1991 in establishing the technical parameters for the planning, design and construction of the Trans-European Motorway (TEM) network. The ECE secretariat, as the Executing Agency, has continued to manage the TEM project. Since UNDP financial support for this project was discontinued at the end of 1991, the TEM countries decided to create a Trust Fund, and a TEM Cooperation Trust Fund Agreement has been signed between ECE and TEM participating countries for the period 1992-1996. ECE will continue to serve as the Executing Agency. The TEM motorway system when completed will provide a continuous link between the North European region and the Mediterranean.

9. Activities carried out within the Trans-European North-South Railway (TER) Project continued in 1991. Since among the present and potential member countries there are several Mediterranean countries, sections of importance for this region will be included in the project. A database is being set up containing technical parameters of infrastructure, performance characteristics, etc. Work in this field was treated as a matter of priority at the meeting of the TER experts on Infrastructure Development and Technical Operation on 21-22 January 1992. The Steering Committee will meet from 24 to 27 March 1992 in Budapest (Hungary) to determine the priorities of the TER countries and the future programme of work of the project.

10. With respect to the Europe-Africa permanent link through the Strait of Gibraltar, the ECE in cooperation with ECA continues to implement Council resolutions on the subject. In this connection, the ECE presented a global evaluation of the studies and work relating to the project to the second regular session of the Council in 1991. The same session approved a resolution (1991/74) requesting the Executive Secretaries of ECA and ECE to prepare an evaluation report on the studies relating to the project in the period 1982-1993 for submission to the Council in 1993.

#### Environment

11. The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (EIA) was signed by 28 ECE member countries, including several Mediterranean countries, and the European Community. Six Mediterranean countries took part in the first meeting of the Signatories of this Convention in December 1991. Albania was the first country to ratify the Convention.

12. Experts from Mediterranean countries participated in the finalization of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (ENVWA/R.54) as well as in a number of other environment-related activities.

13. In their review of initiatives and projects in the field of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the ECE region of relevance to environmental protection (ENVWA/R.63), the Senior Advisers on Environmental and Water Problems examine, *inter alia*, information regarding the Mediterranean Technical Assistance Programme (METAP) which deals with the identification and preparation of environmental investment projects and supports institutional development activities and policies to improve environmental management in the Mediterranean region. They also examine information on the Mediterranean Special Programme of Action (MEDSPA) aimed at the development of demonstration projects, public awareness projects and technical assistance to Cyprus, Malta, Turkey and Yugoslavia.

#### Trade Facilitation and Promotion

14. The Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures has continued its work on the development of UN/EDIFACT which is of interest to all countries of the ECE region including the Mediterranean countries. Conscious of the global importance of facilitation for improving the international trade in all regions, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1989/118, called on the regional commissions, jointly with UNCTAD, to formulate a project for interregional cooperation in this area that would promote the reduction, simplification and harmonization of formalities, procedures and documentation, in particular through the phased application of UN/EDIFACT.

15. In its resolution 1991/76 the Council requested the regional commissions, jointly with UNCTAD, to elaborate specific proposals relating to interregional cooperation on trade facilitation and present them to bilateral donors and funding organizations. The ECE, together with the other regional commissions and UNCTAD, is in the process of finalizing such project proposals at both the regional and global levels. Conscious, however, that a solid foundation should be created for UN/EDIFACT at the regional level before proceeding to

its global application, the ECE secretariat will start with the development of the training component of the regional project applicable to ECE Mediterranean countries as well as to other ECE countries where facilitation of international trade procedures is still at an early stage.

16. In December 1991 the Committee on the Development of Trade considered the possibility of holding a meeting of experts on prospects for east-west trade. Consultations with the Maltese authorities are taking place with a view to convening the meeting in Malta in 1992.

17. At the thirty-ninth session of the Committee (1990), some delegations proposed that the secretariat elaborate on the possibilities of stimulating trade and investment relations between the reforming countries of central and eastern Europe and the member countries of the ECE which are developing from the economic point of view, including ECE countries of the Mediterranean region. It was suggested that the secretariat examine the possibilities of improving trade and economic cooperation among interested countries on a regional basis, and provide guidelines for attracting investments from developed to developing member countries of the ECE. At its fortieth session the Committee requested the secretariat to complete this study.

#### Economic Analysis

18. Economic developments in most Mediterranean countries are reviewed in the Economic Survey of Europe in 1991-1992 and in the Economic Bulletin for Europe (Vol. 43) under the headings devoted to the market economies of the ECE region. Those in Yugoslavia, previously included in the group named "Southern Europe", are treated in these publications together with other central and east European countries now in transition to a market economy. In ECE's work in the field of population relating to the aging of the population and international migration, developments in south European countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and Yugoslavia) are analysed in detail, both collectively and individually in cooperation with national demographic or other research institutes.

#### Energy

19. The secretariat, as requested by the former Committee on Gas, is assisting ESCWA in organizing and servicing the "Interregional Symposium on Gas Development and Market Prospects by the Year 2000 and Beyond", to be held in Damascus (Syrian Arab Republic), on 20-26 June 1992.

20. The secretariat is preparing a contribution to the International Union of Producers and Distributors of Electrical Energy (UNIPEDE) Conference on the Development and Operation of Large Interconnected Power Systems, to be held in Tunis (Tunisia) on 3-5 May 1993.

21. A study was completed on the Integration and Extension of European Gas Grids, including Interconnections with Non-European Suppliers around the Mediterranean. The findings of the ECE Symposium on the Use of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) as Fuels for Internal Combustion Engines (held in Kiev (Ukraine), in September 1991) are also of relevance to countries that consider using such fuels.

22. The ECE/UNDP Project on Solar Applications and Energy Efficiency in Building Design and Town Planning, which concluded on 31 December 1991, has practical applications for the Mediterranean countries. The project promoted greater use of passive solar heating and natural cooling techniques and resulted in the creation of an international network of institutions for low energy building design; a state-of-the-art survey of energy use in the built environment; a simple computer programme for energy efficient building design, a design guide and a computer manual; and a series of international training courses in participating countries.

23. At the Seminar on Solar Power Systems (Alushta (Ukraine), April 1991) participants reviewed the present status and development prospects of solar photovoltaic, solar thermal and solar hybrid systems and addressed the future applications and viability of solar power. A Round Table considered the role of solar energy for environmentally-sustainable energy supply as well as possibilities for international cooperation. The Seminar prepared recommendations addressed to Governments, industry and international organizations (ENERGY/SEM.10/2).

24. The ECE/UNDP project on International Cooperative Research on Low-Calorie Fuel Technology, which concluded on 31 December 1991, was applicable to the Mediterranean region. It aimed at the development of technologies for the efficient and environmentally-sound utilization of brown coal and lignite, thereby enhancing the contribution of indigenous sources of energy to domestic needs. Its outputs consisted of coordinated research between relevant specialized institutes. Study tours were organized as well as training courses, fellowships, ad hoc meetings and workshops. The Project's Steering Committee concluded its work with proposals to ECE and UNDP for international programmes on fluidized-bed gasification of brown coal and lignite, low-NO<sub>x</sub> burners and pre-combustion preparation of solid fuels.

25. An ad hoc meeting in March 1991 considered an interregional project entitled "Global Energy Efficiency 21". This project would be submitted to UNCED for approval and is aimed at enhancing the planning, administrative, economic, technical and financial capacities of developing countries to develop and implement efficient energy systems themselves; It would be implemented by the relevant regional commissions.

#### Agriculture and Timber

26. The Working Party on the Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development, through its Meetings of Experts on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, of Dry and Dried Produce and of Potatoes, deals with produce of considerable economic and commercial importance to countries in the Mediterranean, members of ECE, ECA and ESCWA, which submit to ECE regular requests for standards and related information. In this connection, the publication in January 1992 of UN/ECE Standards for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, a compilation of all the standards for these products which have been approved by the Working Party, is noteworthy. A Symposium on Product Quality in the Agri-Food Sector will be held in Spain in October 1992.

27. A Seminar on Forest Fire Prevention, Land Use and People was held in Greece in October/November 1991, at which the socio-economic problems associated with forest fires, which are of particular concern to the high risk

countries of the Mediterranean basin, received particular attention. The International Forest Fire News is published twice a year and the Forest Fire Statistics annually. Given the high incidence of fires and the considerable damage caused to forests in the Mediterranean countries, these publications are of considerable value to them.

28. In January 1992 the Timber Committee considered its activities aimed specifically at Mediterranean countries. It decided to continue the work on trends, prospects and policies in forestry and forest products in southern Europe. This includes cooperation with the FAO Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions ("Silva Mediterranea"). Special attention is being paid to the cork sector, in the context of the fifth long-term European timber trends and prospects study (ETTS V). A study tour on forestry questions was hosted by Portugal in May 1991 (TIM/R.193).

#### Human Settlements

29. The Meeting of Experts on Human Settlements Problems in Southern Europe, held in Ankara (Turkey) in April 1991 held an in-depth discussion on "Regeneration and Adaptation of Urban Space in Response to the Dynamics of Development Specific to the Mediterranean Countries". The next meeting will take place in Seville (Spain) in October 1992 on the theme "Urban Design and architecture with respect to Mediterranean climate and sustainable development".

#### Industry and Technology

30. A study tour of the chemical industry in Turkey (October 1991) attracted the participation of several experts from Mediterranean countries. The study tour and workshop on the rational use of raw materials and energy in the chemical industry, to be held in Romania in September 1992, is of interest to experts from a number of Mediterranean countries.

31. Several Mediterranean countries prepared monographs for the forum discussion on the organization and management of R & D and economies in transition during the nineteenth session of the Senior Advisers on Science and Technology. A number of Mediterranean countries have contributed to the inventory of safety guidelines in biotechnology.